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For Immediate Release

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Gang Boss Sentenced to Life Without Parole for Ordering Murder Hit While in Prison

Jury Convicted Jesus Faraj at Trial in August

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that defendant and criminal street gang boss Jesus Faraj, 45, was sentenced to life without the possibility parole for ordering an execution-style murder of 32-year-old Jimmy Khieu in February 2019.

On Super Bowl Sunday, 2019, Khieu was shot through the head and left for dead in a drainage ditch in the Fox Canyon neighborhood of San Diego. There were no initial suspects and an investigation ensued, leading to the arrest, charging, and convictions of Faraj and three other defendants who worked at Faraj's behest to track and kill the victim.

"This defendant is a ruthless criminal who casually ordered a murder from his prison cell," DA Stephan said. "This case demonstrates that gang violence has a long and far reach of destruction leaving wounds in our community that last a lifetime. We will never stop fighting to make neighborhoods safe from the scourge of gang violence."

Faraj was the leader of one biggest criminal street gangs in San Diego. While in prison for nearly 20 years on other charges, he rose through the ranks of the gang. At the time of the murder, Faraj used mobile phones from a prison cell to routinely orchestrate criminal activity in San Diego. This included obtaining and distributing large quantities of drugs and guns to put onto the streets of what he considered his neighborhood in order to obtain money, power, and control of the neighborhood. He was feared by many and had loyal gang members ready to do his bidding on the streets.

Apart from the murder, Faraj demonstrably ordered assaults and kidnappings of other victims that were captured on video and introduced in the trial. Ultimately, the jury found that Faraj planned the murder of Jimmy Khieu, which was perpetrated by another longstanding gang member who pled guilty to first degree murder before the trial. This case highlights the commitment to violence and terror that gang leaders show and how much of an impact they have in our community, even while incarcerated.

On November 29, co-defendant and shooter Peter Burgos was sentenced to 29 years in prison. He pleaded guilty to first-degree murder with a gun and admitted the murder was to benefit the gang. Co-defendant Steven Chavez was sentenced to 17 years in prison on July 14 after pleading guilty to voluntary manslaughter to benefit the gang. Co-defendant Kristin Zarate was sentenced to 12 years in prison in October 2022 after pleading guilty to voluntary manslaughter to benefit the gang.

This case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Oscar Hagstrom with the support of his team.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.

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